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ABSTRACT

New York's North Country Community College's model of general education specifies the particular competencies that should be achieved in the college's liberal arts courses. In 1991, a study was undertaken to assess the general education competencies attained by students enrolled in Introductory Psychology. Using a pre-test/post-test design, 111 students were assessed in terms of gains in objective and subjective knowledge of psychology, critical thinking, and writing skills. A 36-item objective test of psychology knowledge, and an essay test of subjective knowledge, critical thinking, and writing ability were administered during the first and last weeks of the course. Three independent reviewers were trained to assess general education competencies as they appeared in student writing samples. Scores were given in each testing category, as well as for each answer's correctness, detail, and style. Significant increases were found for all four competencies examined. The methodology used to study general education from a course-embedded approach was successful and appears to be one which can be used with other courses across the curriculum in assessing general education competencies. A course outline is included. (Author/DJD)

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Assessment of General Education Knowledge and Competencies in PSY 101, Introductory Psychology

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with the assistance of Mr. Michael S. Turmel

North Country Community College

October, 1991

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North Country Community College

Humanities/ Social Science Division

Memorandum

To: Campus Assessment Committee
General Education Task Force
Humanities/ Social Science Faculty

From: Doug Wilmes
Humanities/ Social Science Division Chair

Subject: Assessment Activities

Date: October 29, 1991

The attached report describes the results of a pilot study carried out during the Spring 91 semester to implement and evaluate the method of assessing student outcomes in General Education that is described in the College's Outcome Assessment Plan (June, 1990).

This material may be of interest to those who have been involved with assessment over the past two years. In particular, the report describes actual assessment activities, as opposed to plans for carrying out assessment. In the general education area, therefore, we have moved from the planning to the implementation stage.

In addition, this material may be of general interest to members of the Humanities/ Social Science Division. In future, subject to continuance of the SUNY requirement to assess student outcomes, the procedures described in this report will be applied to a range of courses offered by the Division.

I of course welcome the involvement of any interested members of the Division in the process of revising Course Outlines and designing course-specific pre-test and post-test instruments to carry out course-embedded assessment of general education knowledge and competencies in divisional courses. To become involved, faculty should first read Recommendations for Assessment of General Education (May, 1990), if they have not already done so. Copies are available from Teresa Bordeau at the Saranac Lake Campus.

Abstract

A conceptualization/model of general education was developed specifying particular competencies which should be achieved in liberal arts courses offered at the College. This past year, general education competency assessment was undertaken using this course-embedded perspective. Students enrolled in Introductory Psychology were measured on the specific competencies of knowledge (objective and subjective), critical thinking, and writing which were identified as appropriate for this course. One hundred and eleven students were pre- and post-tested. Three independent reviewers were trained regarding how to assess these general education competencies as they appeared in student writing samples. Significant increases were found for all four competencies examined. The methodology used to study general education from a course-embedded approach was successful and appears to be one which can be used with other courses across the curriculum in assessing general education competencies.

Assessment of General Education Knowledge and Competencies in PSY 101, Introductory Psychology

This paper reports the results of an implementation of a course-embedded approach to assessment of general education in PSY 101. The procedures used to assess student acquisition of knowledge about psychology and competencies to think critically and to write are explained. The results obtained by application of these procedures are detailed.

Carried out in response to the State University of New York's requirement that assessment of student outcomes in the area of General Education take place, the study had three institutional objectives:

--First, to determine whether the methodology for assessment of General Education to which the College committed itself in its Outcome Assessment Plan (June, 1990) was valid--i.e., would it yield quantifiable conclusions that would stand up under standard measures of statistical analysis?

--Second, to determine whether the methodology, if valid, would indicate a significant added value in terms of student outcomes.

--Third, to determine whether the procedures envisioned could be practicably applied and administered on an ongoing basis in relation to a variety of courses.

On the basis of this study, it appears that all of these objectives were attained. To summarize the results:

1. The methodology is valid.
2. Students were proved to have significantly increased their knowledge of psychology and their abilities to think critically and to write.
3. The procedures employed to assess student outcomes can practically be applied within the context of an ongoing regimen of assessment studies of selected courses.

Some introductory explication of what the study does and does not prove may be helpful. As a group, students enrolled in Spring, 1991, sections of PSY 101 at North Country Community College did demonstrate significantly improved knowledge of psychology, ability to think critically, and ability to write, if one compares the knowledge and levels of competency demonstrated at the beginning of the semester with the knowledge and levels of competency demonstrated at the end of the semester. If, in terms of cause and effect analysis, the increase in knowledge and competence is identified as an <u>effect</u>, this effect may be taken as a proven reality. At the end of the semester, students knew more about psychology; they could think more critically; and they could write more competently.

Proof of these assertions of positive effect is contained within the body of this report. However, the <u>cause</u> or <u>causes</u> of this effect are not proven. Common sense would suggest that the principal cause of the increase in knowledge of psychology was

instruction in PSY 101. However, the causal link between enrollment in that course and improvements in ability to think critically and to write is considerably less distinct. Undoubtedly, instruction in that course was a cause, to a greater or lesser degree, but it is virtually certain that instruction in other courses taken by students enrolled in Spring, 1991, PSY 101 sections played a part in producing the positive effects documented in this study. As the Spring, 1991, educational experiences of the 111 students who were pre-tested and post-tested during the course of this study were extremely various, it is impossible on the basis of the evidence available to go very far down the road of scientifically explaining why critical thinking and writing skills improved. (Some data was collected and analyzed relative to enrollment in COM 101.)

However, as the effect is proven, identification of causes is not of great significance, to the degree that assessment ultimately focuses on the overall quality of the educational programs offered to students. This large group of students did demonstrate improved mastery of the targeted knowledge area and competencies following a semester of study that included enrollment in PSY 101 and--in most or all cases--other courses as well. They were better educated at the end of the semester than they were at the beginning. As a result of this study, this assertion can be said to fall into the realm of objective fact rather than wishful thinking. Given that the principal aim of assessment, simply defined, is to demonstrate that students'

participation in the College's program of studies does actually educate them, the limitations of the course-embedded approach (in terms of focus on individual courses rather than the students' program of study as a whole) are more apparent than real. As causalities extend beyond the course in question, the implications of the results are similarly bound to reach beyond the targeted course. This is particularly in the area of general education, where our expectation is that many courses develop the competencies in question.

Turning to another area that requires explication, we would note that the increases in knowledge and competency are best considered as relative rather than absolute values. Correlations to grades earned in PSY 101 are analyzed in the body of this report, but grades are themselves mixtures of relative and absolute value. The procedures employed in this study did include efforts to define criteria for judgment in relation to knowledge, critical thinking, and writing. We thus attempted to assure that the results obtained could be considered in relation to both an absolute and a relative axis of judgment. But the fact remains that it would be a mistake to jump to the conclusion that students are being adequately educated to think critically because their ability to do so has been shown to have improved, or that they are adequate writers because their ability to write did improve over the course of the semester.

These points suggest some hypotheses about general education at North Country Community College that readers may wish to consider as they review the body of this report:

1. General education competencies are developed in a variety of courses, and particular competencies are better developed in some courses rather than in others. Relative increases in student competency, as demonstrated by course-embedded assessment procedures, are likely to be actually significant to the degree that such competencies are explicitly developed in a variety of appropriate courses. For example, if students were more likely in a variety of courses to do more writing and to receive more feedback on their writing, it is probable that the amplitude of increase in writing competency revealed in the assessment of a single course, such as PSY 101, would be greater.

2. Focused attempts to develop competencies within the context of individual courses will pay educational dividends, both in terms of what is learned in individual courses and in reinforcing what is learned in other courses. For example, considerable emphasis is placed in PSY 101 on having students understand and use the scientific method as practiced in the social sciences, and students in PSY 101 are required to write a series of papers. While objectifying the causal link between these activities and the results obtained in this study is impossible, as suggested above, there is little doubt that these activities were a causative factor, although not the only such factor, in producing the increased values. Put another way, if

such was not the case, a fundamental assumption of the educational enterprise would be discredited. (That is, we assume that students develop competencies by using them, and by receiving feedback concerning the strengths and weaknesses of their performances.)

3. An emphasis on obtaining agreement as to the definition of General Education competencies in terms of objectives for student performance will improve the general level of instruction in these competencies and make it possible to consider assessment data in the light of benchmarks that are more absolute and less relative than they may be now. How well should a North Country Community College student be able to think or to write? For that matter, in terms of knowledge, how much, in absolute terms, should he or she know about psychology? These questions bring us to the issue of expectations, an issue that we may be long overdue in considering, in view of the degree of grade inflation that exists at the College.

These are hypotheses that informed the assessment plan produced by the General Education Task Force (Recommendations for Assessment of General Education). Nothing in the report that follows suggests that they are less valid now than they seemed when that report was written.

Finally, it may be useful to provide a schematic overview of the procedures carried out in this study:

1. Definition of General Education Competencies --->
2. Revision of PSY 101 Course Outline to define assessment objectives and procedures --->
3. Pre-Testing
   a. objective knowledge test
   b. writing sample ---> evaluation of subjective knowledge, critical thinking, and writing by a panel of three readers --->
4. Post-Testing
   a. objective knowledge test
   b. writing sample ---> evaluation of knowledge and competencies by readers --->
5. Analysis of scores and demographics using dBASE STATS.

Method

Subjects

One hundred and eleven students in Introductory Psychology were pre- and post-tested on selected measures of General Education. This group represented all students enrolled in this course during the Spring, 1991, semester who were present during the first week of class and later completed the course. Students who added the course after the initial testing or those who initially were enrolled but dropped out during the semester were excluded from the analysis.

Eighty-nine percent of the subjects participating in the study were enrolled as full-time students, the majority being in

their second semester of their first year at a two-year college. Mean age for this sample was 23.2 years (this compares to an overall College mean age of 28.1). Although students represented most academic majors offered at the school, several sizable concentrations were found: liberal arts (21%), math/science (19%), and criminal justice (19%). Thirteen other majors were identified with anywhere from one to eight students in each.

Students participating in this study were enrolled in one of six Introductory Psychology sections offered that semester at North Country Community College at three campus locations (Saranac Lake, (n = 61); Malone, (n = 35); and Ticonderoga, (n = 15). Four different instructors taught these six sections. Two sections had specific training in critical thinking and used the Mayer and Goodchild supplement in addition to their textbook (Plotnick, 1989).

Mean GPA for the semester in which these students were enrolled was a 2.46. Their cumulative GPA was a 2.55 with an average of 28 semester credits having been earned. The mean Introductory Psychology grade for the group was a 2.15.

Design and Procedure

During the first week of the semester, prior to the first lecture in the course, students were evaluated on four indices of General Education. First, an objective test of psychology knowledge was administered. It consisted of 36 items drawn from the domain of psychology topics covered in the introductory

course. Two to five questions were selected for each of 10 content areas. All items had previously been used by instructors in introductory courses so as to be able to judge item difficulty. All items chosen for this objective instrument of psychology knowledge were of moderate difficulty as indicated by item analysis (items chosen were rated 2 or 3 on a 5-point difficulty scale). This 36-item index plus an essay component required approximately 40 minutes of class time to complete. Table 1 describes the objective instrument.

Table 1

Content Analysis of Objective Knowledge Test

History & Research Methods (4)
Physiology & the Brain (4)
Sensation & Perception (2)
Alternate States of Consciousness (3)
Learning (3)
Memory (3)
Human Development (2)
Personality (5)
Cognitive: Intelligence & Language (5)
Abnormal Psychology (5)

( ) number of questions

Subjective knowledge, critical thinking, and writing ability were all measured by a single writing sample. Students were given a situation that a psychologist might have to deal with and asked how they would go about studying this issue. The following scenario was used as the pre-test:

> **You are a psychologist. For some time now you have been teaching psychology and have had to work with a number of students who are test anxious. You would like to design and run an experiment which would test whether or not some kind of treatment to reduce test anxiety would be helpful to your students. How would you do this?**

Students were asked to write out their answer, thinking through the problem as thoroughly as possible so as to include all the components that would be necessary to this experiment scientifically.

This same procedure was repeated during the last week of the course, with one modification. As before, the students took the 36-item objective knowledge test. For the writing sample, however, the problem was changed to present a new situation that would nevertheless be comparable in difficulty to the scenario encountered on the pre-test with the same instructions. Participants were again asked how they would go about studying the following issue:

> **You are a psychologist. You have heard from a number of your students that they are concerned about the effects of violent television programs on their kids. You would like to design and run an experiment which would test whether or not children are affected by the type of television programs they watch. How would you do this?**

Evaluation of the writing sample was done by three outside, independent reviewers: instructors of English, history, and political science. Prior to beginning their work, all three were trained regarding how to evaluate subjective knowledge, critical

thinking, and writing ability. For each of these areas, a 10-point Likert-type scale was set up for judging quality of the response. Reviewers received a model answer to the essay question. Based upon this as a "10" answer, a score was arrived upon for each answer's correctness, detail, and style.

Regarding critical thinking, criteria had been established the year before at the College as reported in Recommendations for Assessment of General Education. For our reviewers, critical thinking was defined as the ability to analyze facts and apply conclusions and principles to unique problems and situations. Furthermore, critical thinkers should be able to apply inductive and deductive logic to real problems. Specific criteria as suggested by Meyers (1986, p. 4), were shared with the reviewers. These included the abilities to: (1) recognize and define the problem, (2) gather information, (3) form tentative conclusions, (4) test conclusions, and (5) evaluate and make decisions. Finally, reviewers were asked to keep in mind that critical thinking as reflected in student writing should (1) demonstrate thinking in a systematic way--using a step-by-step process and approaching the problem in a logical way--and (2) show how a student has analyzed an argument into its components (Mayer & Goodchild, 1990).

Writing ability for both the pre- and post-test was approached in a similar way. Reviewers were instructed to examine writing samples from a holistic perspective. Form and content are organically connected in writing. The formal

elements of the writing will affect the reader's understanding of the content. In other words, a structurally confused sentence or repeated errors in mechanics will inhibit the reader's ability to understand the content with reasonable facility.

The following classification of the formal elements of writing was explained to the reviewers:

1. Ideas - Is there a central idea clearly expressed in the writing?

2. Organization - Is the writing well organized? Is the central idea developed through a sequence of logically related subpoints? Are the transitions between ideas sufficient and effective, such that each sentence leads naturally to the next sentence?

3. Language - Does the syntax display ease and familiarity with written English?

4. Mechanics - Is there significant weakness in areas such as punctuation, spelling, agreement, correct diction, and basic sentence flaws (fragments, run-ons, comma splices).

As with critical thinking, writing ability was evaluated on the same Likert-type scale of one to ten.

Subjective knowledge was judged by evaluation of the actual content of the writing sample. Reviewers worked from a sample paper demonstrating all the points included on a paper worth a "10" rating.

To contend with the issue of reviewer consistency from the first to the second reading, each reviewer re-evaluated 15 pre-

test writing samples at the time the post-test papers were assessed. No significant differences were found between the first and second reading of the same papers on any of the three scales ($t(14)$, $p > .05$). This analysis indicates that reviewers read both the pre- and post-tests with a similar critical eye

Results

Significant differences were found in all four areas of general education assessed: (1) objective knowledge, (2) subjective knowledge, (3) critical thinking, and (4) writing. On all measures, students showed an increase indicating an improvement in their abilities by the conclusion of this course. These results are described below in Table 2.

Table 2

T-test Values for General Education Measures

	Pretests: Objective Knowledge	Subjective Knowledge	Critical Thinking	Writing
Posttests: Objective Knowledge	10.23 *			
Subjective Knowledge		12.33 *		
Critical Thinking			9.24 *	
Writing				4.50 *

* $p < .0001$

Significant differences were seen between the objective pre-test and post-test scores, $t(110) = 10.23$, $p < .0001$. Similar significant differences were found in the pre-test and post-test scores for subjective knowledge, $t(110) = 12.33$, $p < .0001$; critical thinking, $t(110) = 9.24$, $p < .0001$; and writing ability, $t(110) = 4.50$, $p < .0001$. No significant differences were seen between the groups with specific training in critical thinking and those who did not receive this instruction ($F(2,104) = 1.97$, $p < .1438$).

Table 3 indicates the mean scores on these four indices of general education. Over the course of a 15 week semester, similar increments of change are seen in subjective knowledge and critical thinking.

Table 3

Mean Scores on Pre- and Post Tests

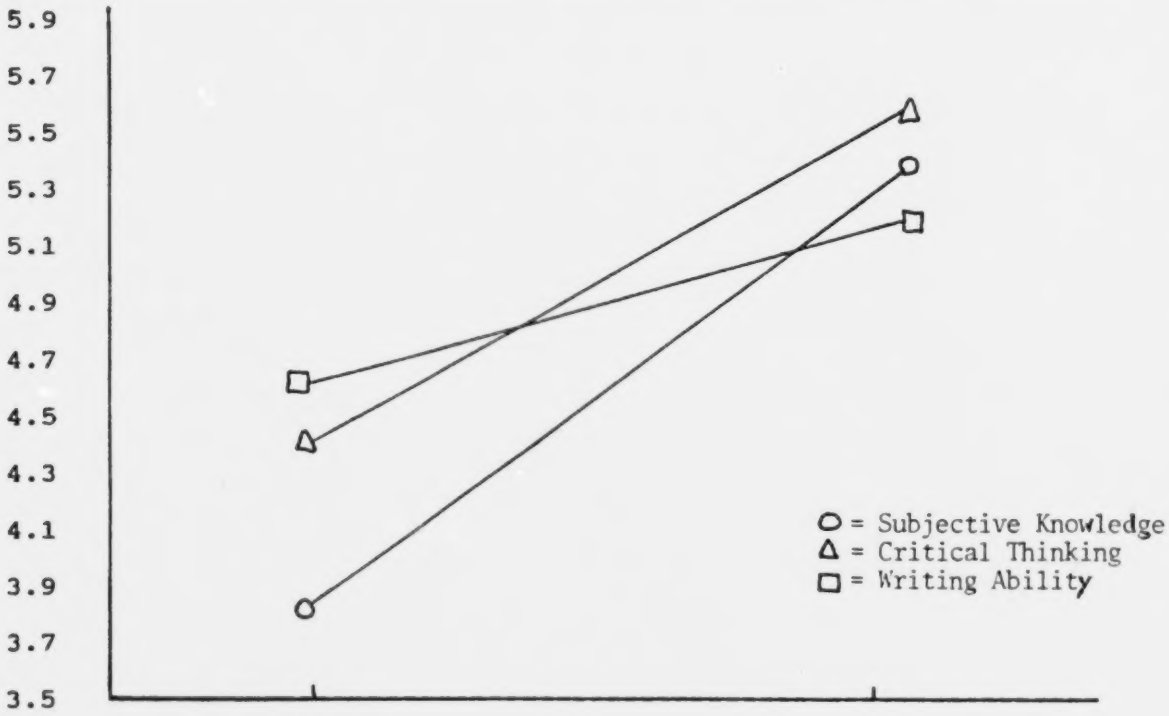
		Pre-Test	Post-Test
Objective Knowledge	M	13.40	18.33 *
	SD	3.44	5.25
Subjective Knowledge	M	3.82	5.34 *
	SD	1.46	1.10
Critical Thinking	M	4.39	5.60 *
	SD	1.50	0.98
Writing Ability	M	4.61	5.17 *
	SD	1.48	1.07

* $p<.0001$

Although the magnitude of the change in writing ability was not quite as great, it was still highly significant. Subjective knowledge, which was more correlated to the objective knowledge score (r = 0.458), shows the most improvement as a result of the course. (See Chart 1)

Chart 1

Pre-/Post-test Changes in General Education Competencies



Correlations computed between PSY 101 (Introductory Psychology) grades and general education post-test measures indicated moderate relationships between grades and measures of writing ability, critical thinking, and subjective knowledge (all were measured by a writing sample). A much higher correlation (r = 0.634) was found between students' final grades in psychology and their objective post-test measures of knowledge. Table 4 displays these correlations.

Table 4

Correlation Coefficients Between PSY 101 Grades and General Education Competencies

	Objective Knowledge	Subjective Knowledge	Critical Thinking	Writing Ability
PSY 101 Grade	.6342 *	.4606 *	.4130 *	.4140 *

p<.001

Correlations between the different general education component indices show moderate, although significant relationships with the objective knowledge test. Examination of the three general education components as assessed by writing samples yielded very strong correlations, particularly between subjective knowledge of psychology and critical thinking (r=0.9376). See Table 5.

Table 5
Inter-Index Correlations

	Objective Knowledge	Subjective Knowledge	Critical Thinking	Writing Ability
Objective Knowledge	1.000	.458 **	.404 **	.306 *
Subjective Knowledge		1.000	.938 **	.697**
Critical Thinking			1.000	.742**
Writing Ability				1.000

* p<.01 ** p<.001

Discussion

Based upon the results of this study, it appears that general education assessment can be approached from the course-embedded perspective. While general education is certainly a global concept with regard to a student's overall education, elements of this concept can be examined and measured within a given course. Those addressing "general education" have offered numerous definitions of what it is, but vary as to the exact components of which it consists. Although differences exist in its definition, an even more difficult task lies in the actual assessment of general education. The course-embedded approach focuses the analysis on individual courses and identifies specific competencies which could be addressed either due to the nature of the topic being studied or because of the kind of process students are going through in such a course.

In Introductory Psychology, three general education competencies were identified as appropriate to this course. Although this study only measured these competencies, it is possible that others (e.g., cultural sensitivity) could also be included. In fact, since more textbooks, both introductory and developmental, are now emphasizing cross-cultural research and examples, it seems reasonable that changes in a person's sensitivity of other cultures could equally be approached using the course-embedded method of assessment.

The results reported here show increases in skill ability in these areas of general education. The methodology used appears to be appropriate to disentangle several of the competencies we had hoped to examine. In terms of knowledge of psychology, both absolute knowledge and "subjectively" measured knowledge showed significant increases. Certainly in terms of course content positive changes in absolute knowledge are hardly surprising. However, the more subjective-type of knowledge which students demonstrated when asked to "think like a psychologist" and solve a problem indicates an application of what has been learned over the course of the semester in psychology. Students' significant improvement in expressing this kind of understanding of psychology may be more important than simple fact accumulation or item recognition as required on objective tests. It is this very type of general education competency that we hope our students acquire after having spent any amount of time in higher education.

Critical thinking, as it has been defined, was also able to be examined within the context of a single course. There is no doubt that we want our psychology students to become better at critically evaluating material which they read or behaviors/events which they encounter. One approach now being taken is the incorporation of critical thinking sections/ exercises in each chapter of the introductory textbook (Huffman, Vernoy, Williams, and Vernoy, 1991; Wade and Tavris, 1990) or by means of an ancillary publication accompanying a textbook (Mayer and Goodchild, 1990). Little evidence exists as to the effectiveness of one approach over the other in developing critical thinking skills. Implicitly, one could argue that once a framework has been mastered and enough practice has occurred, a person should be a more rather than a less efficient critical thinker. Although global instruments measuring critical thinking have been developed, their effectiveness in measuring change within a particular course or even over a relatively short period of time (a semester) is questionable. It should also be considered whether or not going through a process can make students more critical in their thinking. If the introductory course is empirically oriented, with an emphasis placed on developing students' understanding of the scientific method psychologists employ, then critical thinking abilities could develop by the end of such a process. Thinking in a systematic manner and developing the ability to analyze an argument into its components (parts of the above stated definition of critical

thinking used in this study) become end products of the introductory psychology course. In this study, students who worked through a particular critical thinking "program" showed no greater improvements in critical thinking than those students who had no special treatment of the topic. Rather than viewing this result as evidence for the ineffectiveness of the material, we believe that which Mayer and Goodchild emphasize may simply be accomplished in the normal course of teaching the introductory course. Both groups of students improved in their critical thinking ability.

Finally, writing competency improves if writing is required in courses--particularly those outside traditional English courses. In all psychology courses, a writing component is required so as to help students communicate more efficiently. We have known for a long time that it is only through the process of writing and receiving ample feedback on one's writing that an improvement in this skill can be accomplished. Students who were able to express their ideas better in writing were also better able to demonstrate a higher level of critical thinking and knowledge about the subject they were writing about.

In conclusion, aside from all the content issues one is concerned with, specific general education competencies can also be identified and measured within the scope of a particular course. Once competencies have been selected and defined, it is a matter of whether a specific course encourages the development of them. Measurement of these competencies then becomes the

crucial and difficult issue. The course-embedded approach allows analysis of general education "along the way." In as much as our goal is to graduate individuals who have received a better general education, it is also possible to examine or check the acquisition of these competencies as they occur, course by course, and gradually over a period of time.

References

General Education Task Force. (1990). Recommendations for assessment of general education at North Country Community College. Saramac Lake, NY: North Country Community College.

Huffman, K., Vernoy, M., Williams, B., & Vernoy, J. (1991). Psychology in action (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.

Mayer, R., & Goodchild, F. (1990). The critical thinker: Thinking and learning strategies for psychology students. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown.

Wade, C., & Tavris, C. (1990). Learning to think critically: The case of close relationships. New York: Harper & Row.

North Country Community College

Humanities/ Social Science Division

May, 1991

COURSE OUTLINE

I. COURSE NUMBER: PSY 101

COURSE TITLE: Introductory Psychology

CREDIT HOURS: 3.0

CONTACT HOURS: 45

PREREQUISITE: None

II. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

An introduction to the systematic study of human behavior and experience. Students will become acquainted with the methods and language of the discipline.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

A. To understand the basic principles, assumptions, and terminology of psychology.

B. To understand the processes of observation, description, explanation, prediction, and control used by psychologists.

C. To understand how psychology can be applied to everyday life.

IV. COURSE CONTENT:

A. Basic Principles of Psychology

1. The psychology method

2. History of psychology (orientations)

3. Types of psychologists

4. Research methodologies

B. Physiological Foundations of Psychology

1. The brain, biology and behavior
2. The sensory experience
3. Principles of perception
4. Altered states of consciousness
5. Patterns of dreaming and sleeping

C. Principles of Learning

1. Classical vs. operant conditioning
2. Memory
3. Cognition

D. Affective Behaviors

1. Motivation
2. Emotions
3. Conflict

E. Life-Span Development

1. Theories of human development
2. Stages of the life cycle

F. Individual Differences

1. Defining, measuring, and understanding intelligence
2. Personality characteristics
3. Personality measurement
4. Theories of personality

G. Abnormal Behavior/ Deviance

1. Basic assumption of normalcy
2. Categories of psychopathology

i. Anxiety disorders

ii. Psychoses

3. Treatment and therapeutic approaches

H. The Individual and the Group

1. People in a social context--issues of social psychology

2. Attitudes and belief systems

3. Human sexuality

V. EVALUATION:

A. Five objective and essay exams covering course content.

B. A comprehensive objective final exam.

C. Writing Assignments: Students will review three (3) journal articles related to different aspects of introductory psychology and write an article review and personal reaction to each one. An article review will be due at the end of the first, second, and third five weeks of the semester.

For the first third of the course, the article must relate to the experimental method, physiological psychology, sensation and perception, or altered states of consciousness. The second article must relate to conditioning, memory, language, motivation, or emotion. For the final third of the course, the third article should relate to human development, intelligence, personality, abnormal psychology, or social psychology.

Articles must be chosen from the professional literature (e.g., Journal of Child Development, Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, Science, etc.). Popular magazines are not appropriate for this assignment. Each article review and reaction should be three typed pages in length.

VI. GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT:

A. Competencies

1. Critical Thinking

2. Writing

B. Knowledge

General knowledge of psychology

C. Assessment Measures

1. Knowledge will be assessed by means of an objective pre- and post-test instrument measuring general knowledge of course content and by means of pre- and post-written responses to case studies (see VI. C. 3, below).

2. Critical Thinking: Class time will be devoted to describing and evaluating issues in psychology from this crtical thinking perspective. By the end of the course, students will have examined at least six topics critically and will have learned a model that could be applied in the evaluation of any psychological investigation. Specifically, students will be able to:

a. State and evaluate the assertion.

b. Put the assertion into one's own words.

c. Give a concrete example of the assertion.

d. State and evaluate the empirical evidence.

e. State and evaluate the theoretical explanation.

Assessment: See VI. C. 3, below.

3. Writing: Students will write three article reviews. Every five weeks, students will be assigned a topic for which they must find an article from an acceptable professional journal in the LRC. (see above, V. C). In addition, some components of the exams will require the students to write essay responses.

Assessment: general knowledge of psychology and competencies to think critically and to write will be evaluated at the start of the course and at the end of the course using the following procedure:

a. Students will be asked to respond in writing to a problem requiring the application of general knowledge, critical thinking, and writing competencies.

b. Responses will be read holistically by a panel of three readers, who will individually rate each writer's competency in the three assessment areas, using a one to ten scale.

VII. TEXTBOOK:

The following textbook is required:

Huffman, Karen. Psychology in Action, 2nd ed. Wiley. 0-47-51208-7

_____. Workbook to accompany Psychology in Action.

VIII. SPECIAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

A. Enrollment Limit: 30

B. Classroom and Scheduling Restrictions:

C. Equipment and Instructional Supplies:

D. Other Special Requirements or Restrictions:

E. Bibliography:

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